



Flood Protection Information



As we enter the rainy season, please remember that your property may be located in or near a floodplain. Although improvements to the Santa Ana River have reduced potential flood impacts, flooding in our city may occur. Flooding may be caused by the Santa Ana River, East Garden Grove Wintersburg Channel, Talbert Channel,

Huntington Beach Channel, or the Pacific Ocean. Most floods occur when the floodwaters leave the river or channels; however, abnormally large sea waves (tsunamis) from the ocean may create flooding near the coastline.

Historical flooding of Huntington Beach dates back to 1825. Although flood control improvements have been and continue to be made, flooding can still occur today. Flooding can come with little warning. Residents in flood prone areas will be warned of an actual emergency condition by the sounding of a steady siren tone lasting three minutes. This signal will be provided by one or more local fire stations. Warning and emergency procedures will be announced on local cable HDTV-3 (Channel 3), and radio station KWVE (107.9 FM). If flood is likely, and time permits, move your valuable furnishings and essential items to the upper floor of your home or higher off the floor. Place sandbags around your property to divert floodwater.

You may contact the Planning Department at (714) 536-5271 to determine if a property is in a flood zone, obtain flood protection advice, insurance requirements, and elevation certificates. The Building and Public Works Departments can also provide assistance regarding construction in the floodplain. If requested, City staff is available to undertake site visits to review flood, drainage or retro-fitting issues. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Army Corps of Engineers provide technical assistance to the City.

During the life of a 30-year mortgage there is a 26% chance of experiencing a flood. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. Because Huntington Beach participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Community Rating System (CRS), you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy at a reduced rate. This insurance is backed by the Federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded. There is a 30-day waiting period before NFIP coverage takes effect. If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent.

More information about NFIP flood insurance requirements is available on the Internet. Visit <http://www.fema.gov/nfip>. The site contains hazard information, a general flood map, and a frequently asked question page. Or you may call 1-888-CALL-FLOOD.

There are several ways that you can protect your property from flood damage. One way is to keep water away by installing a drainage system in your yard that will allow

excess water to flow into the storm drain. Another approach is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorways. These measures are called floodproofing or retrofitting. Please remember that any alteration to your building requires a permit from the Building and Safety Department. Important documents and irreplaceable personal objects such as photographs and insurance papers should be placed where they will not get damaged. There are flood protection references available at the Central Library, Main Street Branch, Graham Street Branch, Banning Avenue Branch, and the Planning Department at City Hall.

When a property is located in the floodplain, all new construction or substantial improvement that equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value is required to comply with the City's floodplain overlay regulations which require elevation of residential structures. Nonresidential structures may be elevated and/or floodproofed. A completed flood elevation certificate must be submitted to the City following completion of the structure's lowest floor. Substantially damaged buildings where the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged must be brought up to the same standards as a new or substantially improved structure.

What you can do:

Flood damage protection depends also on your cooperation and assistance. Here is how you can help:

- Always check with the City before you build on, alter, regrade, or add fill to your property. A permit is required to ensure that projects do not cause problems on other properties.
- Do not dump or throw anything in the storm drain catch basins or flood control channels. Dumping is a violation of the City's Municipal Code Sections 14.24.030 and 14.24.035. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug the drainage system. The City has a flood control channel maintenance program which helps to remove major blockages such as weeds and other debris. A plugged drain or channel cannot carry water, and when it rains, the water has to go somewhere. Every piece of trash contributes to flooding.

Here are a few flood safety tips:



Do not walk through flowing water.
Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods.

Do not drive through a flooded area.
More people drown in their cars than anywhere else.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.
The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution.